April 27, 2001

Together, Dear Colleagues . . .

. . . we have taken bold steps toward capturing The University of Akron's destiny of being recognized as the public research university for Northern Ohio. Along the way we have learned that, through shared leadership and shared responsibility, we can achieve much - setting the standard for student success, leading the state in information technology innovation, beginning to revitalize our campus and the surrounding community, and Charting the Course for ongoing excellence.

Today, we begin to take another important step as the University launches a two-year self-study that will culminate with a visit in April 2003 by evaluators from the North Central Association, our institutional accrediting agency. The Self-Study Steering Committee will establish through clear and unequivocal evidence that The University of Akron merits being returned to a 10-year comprehensive visit cycle, given the restoration of stability in leadership and a shared plan of action.

Chaired by the Associate Provost for Policies, Procedures, and Reviews from the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost and advised by the Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts (who served as NCA Self-Study Coordinator from 1996 until 2000) as liaison, the Self-Study Steering Committee will organize its work to coordinate with the strategic thinking process already in place.

The Self-Study will include a comprehensive description and analysis of the University's major characteristics and operations including its strategic intent, core and enabling competencies, priorities, and strategies; academic programs and support services; human, physical, informational, and financial resources; and its opportunities and future plans. In order to accomplish that comprehensive self-evaluation, subcommittees, consisting of steering committee members as well as representatives from other campus and community constituencies, will be formed to assess the University's fitness in regard to the NCA's five evaluative criteria and General Institutional Requirements.

Beginning in September 2001, subcommittees will gather data and develop draft reports, which will be submitted to the Steering Committee in December. The first draft of the self-study will be prepared in May 2002 and distributed for review and revision no later than August of that year. Preparation of the final self-study document will begin in November 2002 and will be submitted to the NCA in February 2003. The NCA team will visit campus the following April, and their report will be delivered to the University in June 2003.

Through the self-study process, extensive efforts will be made to solicit reactions from all members of the University community through an NCA web site, written updates, open forums, focus groups, and rough drafts of the Self-Study Report placed in college and support unit offices.
I hope that you will review the complete details and ongoing progress of the self-study on the web at www.uakron.edu/provost/nca, and I urge to participate as needed in this important process of institutional renewal and improvement.

We believe that this self-study will reveal a dynamic, forward-looking institution that is mindful of its traditions and firmly committed to a future as a place where its students, faculty, staff, and sponsoring society can dream, dare, and do the things that it takes to change the world.

Your efforts to advance the obvious promise our University are crucial and are deeply appreciated.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Luis Proenza